



Vocal Exploration Props, Books, and Ideas

by Connie Greenwood

Vocal exploration is essential to develop the speaking and singing voice. It can be defined as vocalizing pitch ranges to coordinate lips, teeth, tongue, as well as breathing. Music teachers use vocal exploration to promote pitch awareness and healthy singing voices. Many children are not aware of the sensation of singing so these fun and playful games are the perfect way to connect their bodies and ears for tuneful singing.

Here are eight props and eight books that I use to incorporate vocal exploration in my classes.

1. Vocal exploration is natural for all people of all ages.

Babies use their lengthening muscles (head voice) when they coo, but as toddlers/ pre-K children begin to talk they use their shortening muscles (chest voice) much more and lose the sensation or feeling of singing. Vocal exploration helps us regain connection to our lengthening muscles and helps us sing in tune.

In the beginning of the year, I start with this-

Four Voice Poem- Ideas from David Row, Make Moments Matter

- This is my speaking voice, I use it every day- Rabbit,
- This is my whisper voice, it's quiet don't you say- Butterfly
- This is my calling voice, I use it to say, "Hey!"- Bear
- This is my singing voice, I like to sing each day!-Owl

"*I speak like this..*" poem by Helen Kemp, learned from Lillie Feierabend

I speak like this, (*echo*)

I whisper like this, (*echo*)

I call like this. (*echo*)

I sing like this la-la- la- la....(*echo*).

Feierabend Association for Music Education

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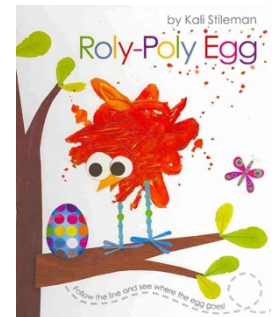
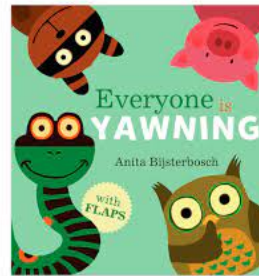
2. Props-

- Slide whistle, train, siren whistle, cuckoo whistle
- Vocal exploration box, also used for movement
- Giant slinky- <https://a.co/d/3gDUp9e> v
- Giant fan or ribbon- <https://a.co/d/61Sc8Eh>
- Teachers pay teacher- “Wee willie Winkie” vocal exploration cards
- Flying discs- <https://a.co/d/0nZZu4p>
- Space ball- Flying Orb ball- <https://a.co/d/cyH0vxz>
- Folkmanis Puppets (Rabbit, butterfly, owls, bear and hummingbirds used in my presentation) - [Folkmanis Puppets Website](https://www.folkmanispuppets.com/)



3. Books-

- Everyone's Yawning- by Anita Bijsterbosch
- Through the Town by Craig Shuttlewood
- Fortunately- by Remy Charlip
- Roly- Poly Egg = by Kali Stileman
- Little Wolf's Song- by Britta Teckentrup
- Escargot- by Dashka Slater and SydneyHanson
- The Squiggle- by Carole Lexa Schaefer, Illustrated by Pierr Morgan
- Little Green - by Keith Baker



When children discover they have flexible vocal , chords the world of singing opens before them. Like any other musical skill, with time and practice as well as by being exposed to a correct vocal role model, children will connect their voice and their ear and learn to sing.

Keep encouraging a child in vocal exploration. Every time a child says, "Whoops! Uh-oh!" Or sighs with inflection, they are using vocal exploration and that's what will help them find their unique singing voice.

Connie Greenwood is a FAME endorsed First Steps in Music teacher, teacher trainer, mentor, and advocate. Connie runs her own music business, Greenwood Music Services, LLC, and presently teaches birth to kindergarten music classes in several schools as well as First Steps in Music parent/child classes.

